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Sick building syndrome?

Concordia Student Union

**Ink**

ISSUE 2, SEPT. 15 1994



# Funding, willpower and safety

## More buildings prone to air problems than just the VA

by Jonathan Carruthers

Feeling nauseous? Watery eyes due to fatigue? Feel unsafe at night on campus? The culprit may be your own University.

After the recent condemnation of the VA building's basement due to poor air quality, one wonders whether other areas of the university are unsafe for its population of students, administrators, faculty and staff.

The in-house watch dogs are Concordia's Office of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS). Responding to complaints and government regulations, they quantify the problems and make recommendations to the office of the Vice-Rector Services. Their public reports have uncovered many problem areas in Concordia's working and studying environments. Some of these problems have been rectified, a great many others have not.

The public nature of these documents are testimony to the fact that this office has done its homework in exposing unfortunate weak spots in the university's ability to fund and prioritize these recommendations.

### VA complaints since 1981

The last chapter in the VA's sordid tale may have been written, but according to Michel Pelletier, a Fine Arts member of a Central Advisory Sub-Committee on Health and Safety, it was a long time coming. "We had been complaining since 1981," he said, but the EHS Office was only contacted in November, 1993. It was only then that the problem was identified. It confirmed what technicians and students had been complaining about for years. In Pelletier's office alone, carbon dioxide levels were twice as high (1440 parts/million) as is considered healthy.

"It isn't one person, it's the system. No one prioritized it, no one was responsible and no one gave a damn. With a lack of funds you can't blame any one person",

said Pelletier.

However, bad air isn't limited to the Fine Arts Department. Complaints have been received from all over the University, including the GM Building, the lower floors of the of the Centennial building and the first and fourth floors of the Bryan building.

Recently, the most contentious

two years have concluded that among other things, there simply isn't enough fresh air going through the building.

Another inspection report of the SGW Engineering Laboratories and Shops dated May 13, 1994, has more disturbing facts. According to that report, the Hall Building's Room H0023, the Soils Testing Area, presents a potential

ominous PCB container behind the RF Building at Loyola — to a central switch-board in the Hall building. This allows for easy detection of fires when people are not around.

The City of Montreal has set a semi-stringent regulation that all buildings over three stories high must have a sprinkler system by 1996. So far, sprinklers only exist on floors 13 to 15 in the Hall Building and in all recently-renovated rooms, including Reggie's and a number of classrooms. Similarly, the Drummond Science building and the Loyola student residences are without sprinklers. Right now, there is no plan to install a full system in these or other buildings.

### Funding slowing progress

Standing in the way of these safety measures is money. "It's not

that they don't want to do it — they don't have the money," says Lanthier. Meanwhile, the cost of insuring these buildings is higher because of it.

There continues to be asbestos in the Hall and Drummond Buildings as well. Again, asbestos removal only comes with renovation and reconstruction, very much like the sprinklers. According to EHS' Ward, it is not so much a hazard to students as it is a hazard to Physical Plant workers who must go into walls to make repairs. Training courses have been given to these workers, but there is no plan to universally remove these substances.

Another hazard at universities in general is chemical spills. A report dated June 2, 1994, describes a small spill of very concentrated sulfuric acid caused by

a student in H837, a Physics lab in the Hall Building. There is no eyewash or shower in this lab — two basic safety standards. Although the report recommends their installation, nothing has been done so far.

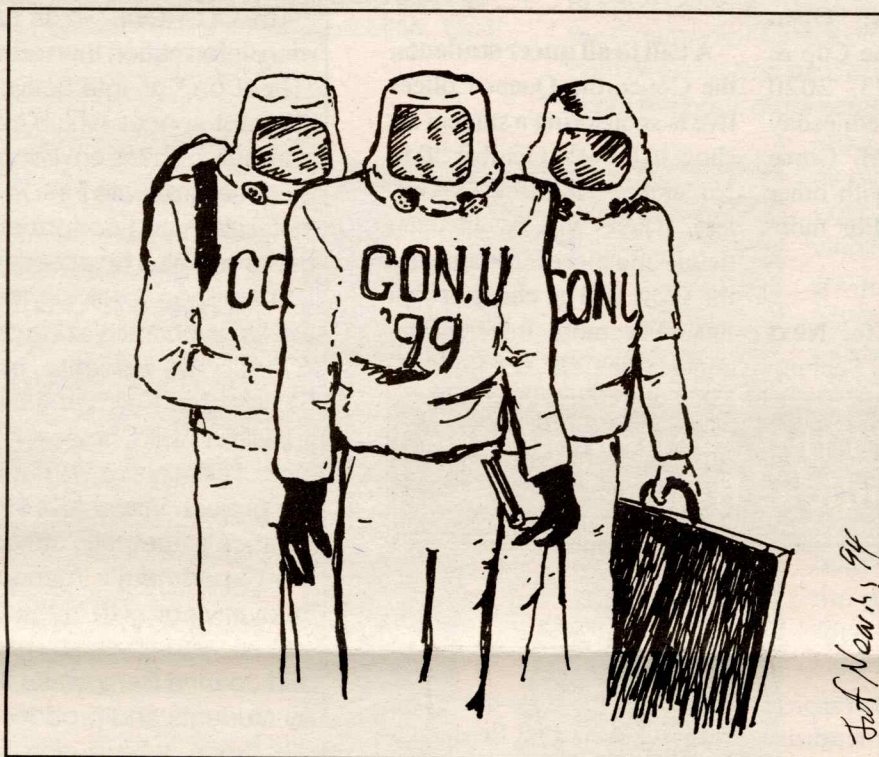
Student safety and security has also been a topic of discussion lately. A number of areas have been identified as security problems for students, including the Fine Arts FS Building, the Athletics parking area and Bishop and Mackay Annexes. (Ironically, the EHS Offices are located on Bishop Street.) Karen Ward of EHS, who is helping organize a committee to address these problems, fears for her own safety after dark in her office because there is a lack of proper security.

### Take care of the buildings we have?

The greatest impediment to the creation of a safer, more secure environment at this University for staff and students is both the financing and the will to prioritize health and safety issues over other issues. Money seems to grow on trees for sports complexes and concert halls — no doubt the university needs them. The question is, however, at what cost. The Central Advisory Committee on Health and Safety and the Environmental Health and Safety Office have shown us that more can be done if the will exists. Must we wait for a physical assault or a lawsuit to force change?

The last word goes to Susan Magor Director of the EHS Office, who said, "Accidents don't just happen, they result from a lack of control and poor planning. We want to have measures in place immediately to mitigate the effects of potential problems. There exists a need to have in place a good response, investigation and follow up."

*If any student would wish to become involved in the movement to make Concordia a safer environment to study, work and live, please contact Jonathan Carruthers at the Concordia Student Union.*



area has been the newly-constructed McConnell Library Building downtown. A petition, signed by second- and third-floor employees on September 9, 1994, attributes "asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia, dry eyes, headaches, sinus problems, sore throats, light headedness and extreme drowsiness" to the building's air quality. This petition sits on the top of a file full of complaints at the EHS office.

"Everything has been done to band-aid the situation", according to Karen Ward the EHS's industrial hygienist "but the problem remains."

### New Library may be a sick building

Although the building is new, it was built according to old standards. Ward's reports over the last

silicosis hazard during the pouring of soil, which involves the releasing of silicon dust which has been linked to lung disease. The report details many areas which have since been rectified or improved, but to this day, the H0023 problem persists.

### Fire safety a concern of EHS office

The EHS Office is also responsible for fire safety. A detailed quarterly report issued May 11, 1994, shows many small inadequacies in the general fire plan which are now being addressed. One large accomplishment, according to Normand Lanthier, the person responsible for fire and public safety at the EHS, is the updated Fire Response System which hooks up all university-owned buildings — including the

On pages 13 to 15 of the Handbook there were several inaccuracies in the section dealing with registration.

1. There is no longer a \$100 deposit necessary to register for classes.

2. When dropping a class, students must use CARL to affect any changes. (A further clarification of this is needed from the Registrar's Office for Fine Arts students, who do not use CARL to register.)

3. There are no refunds after the DNE dealines. (Even though there used to be partial refunds for dropping after the DNE date.)

4. The Registrar's Office has extended the deadline for withdrawing from fall/ winter (1/3) and winter (1/4) courses to March 7, 1995

## Handbook corrections

In the section describing Health Services, the Peer Health Educators are incorrectly referred to as Peer Helpers.

The article "Gay Hangouts" listed as being written by Charlene Nero on page 88 was actually compiled by a group of Link writers. The story also first appeared in the Link, which should have been noted.

The Concordia Student Union regrets these mistakes.



# AGENDA

## GENERAL

(for Sept. 15 to Sept. 29)

### Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, next exhibition:

September 22 - November 1, 1994: "in habitable places" (Roland Brener, Robin Collyer, Angela Grauerholz, Clara Gutsche, Alain Paiement, Sylvie Readman and Ian Wallace)

To begin the new academic year, the gallery will feature a mixture of photography and sculptural installations examining the grey area between private and public property, and a collage of the various types of construction humans have littered the planet with.

### The Concordia Queer

Collective is holding their first official meeting of the term this Friday, Sept. 16 at 5:30 PM. Please check our office for the location of the meeting or call 848-7414. (2020 Mackay, room 102)

**CUTV General Meetings:** 7-8 PM on Thursday 15 Sept., Friday 16 Sept. and Monday 19 Sept. in Room H-651-1 (CUTV Office).

**English Students:** Open coffee sessions at the Cup & Chaucer II (P-103, 2020 MacKay) every Wednesday between 12 and 3 PM. Come hang out and jaw with other English students. For more info, call 848-7411.

**University Senate, Next Meeting:** Friday, 16 Septem-

ber, at 2 PM at the Senate Chambers, DL 200, Loyola Campus.

The new Student appointees to the highest academic body of the University take their places as Senators at this meeting.

**The Student Caucus** of Senate meets monthly to discuss Senate related issues. All members of the Concordia Community are invited to attend the Sept. 30 meeting.

**A call to all queer students,** the Concordia Queer Collective is sponsoring a student art show to be held October 30 to November 5 in the VAV Gallery. There will be an open theme and pieces that appear in the show will be chosen by a jury. For more information, contact the CQC at 848-7414.

**To have your event appear in this section, please contact Kristina Bolh at H-637**

## Orientation '94

by Jeff Nearing

Student Union Orientation arrived with the bang of a drum and the smell of a barbeque and free breakfast. Tuesday's Street Festival and free concert on Mackay brought together new and old students beside the Hall Building for a day of music, food and beer. Our Lady Peace gathered more fans, Chocolate Dave grunged away, and Juanita gave us a preview of Friday's benefit. But the showstoppers, Slaves on Dope and Concordia's own Babelfish outdid themselves, raising the excitement and lighting up the switchboard at MUC Police Station 25.

Wednesday's LaserQuest was also a hit as over three hundred students poured down Ste. Catherine Street and took advantage of four hours of free techno war as the maze was opened for Concordians. And later that evening, more than two hundred students packed Reggie's to catch the KomicKazes, a Toronto comedy troupe.

Thursday was a day for Fine Arts students. As they celebrated the release of the latest Volute (see review above), they were entertained by an impromptu appearance by the On The Spot

Improv troupe. And after appreciating the wine and magazine, students enjoyed a movie campout.

turning to the stage in the company of Front End Loader, The Snitches, cool Celt Liam Callaghan and Go Van Gogh. The



The members of Gogh Van Gogh had some fun down in the games room at the Campus Centre before hitting the stage at the AIDS benefit concert on Friday night.

But the organizers woke Friday to chilly weather and the threat of rain. As the clouds cleared, the stage was being set for the AIDS benefit. But few were brave enough to head out into the frosty weather to enjoy the outdoor show. "We expected about four times as many students to show up for the concert," James Edwards, Orientation Coordinator explained, citing advance ticket sales, "But with the temperature hovering at twelve degrees, we were glad to have the people who showed up." For those who were there the show was spectacular, with Juanita re-

Student Union has decided to make a donation to the Farha Foundation based on gate receipts. "The donation will not be as large as we would have hoped, but there are other ways for the Student Union to support the foundation" commented Marika Giles, Student Union President. "We will be encouraging as many students as possible to come out and walk with us in the foundation's walkathon for AIDS research, Ça Marche."

Giles added though that she felt it was unfortunate that the turnout for some of the events was so low.

## Volute launch a success

by Iva Olam

The worlds of art and high tech came together last Thursday evening during the launching of Volute Magazine's latest issue at the VAV Gallery on René Levesque.

Over four hundred people were present at the vernissage to experience yet another gallery space: the "virtual gallery" contained within the magazine's new companion CD-ROM, the first ever produced by an undergraduate magazine.

Published by the Undergraduate Art History Students Association, Volute, which is being sent to universities and art spaces across Canada, represents a major accomplishment for Concordia's community.

The CD-ROM, which can store up to five hundred times more information than normal computer disks, is home to the "Theatron," an interactive "virtual gallery" containing seven different spaces which can be explored using a Macintosh computer. These environments showcase multimedia works by undergraduate Fine Arts students, ranging from video to installation and performance art. Recordings by music students can also be accessed on a standard audio CD player.

In addition to giving much-needed exposure to student works, such trailblazing projects put Concordia on the map. "Concordia benefits from student innovations," says Christopher Kuilman, Volute's editor.

Kuilman said, however, that he was disappointed with the lack of administrative support he encountered while running the project. Visual Arts students, he added, find the administration's apathetic attitude incomprehensible, considering the department's mandate of encouraging and fostering innovative growth in the Fine Arts.

Originally initiated by project coordinators Raz Schionning and Joanna Berzowska, the CD-ROM was created entirely by students and produced on a deficit budget.

Kuilman, who during the last three years has seen the magazine evolve from a hand-typed and stapled affair to its current state-of-the-art rendition, believes that Volute's new CD-ROM issue has the potential of becoming a commercially viable venture given more initial funding.

He also foresees the CD-ROM issue opening up "endless possibilities" for the future benefit of Fine Arts students, such as inter-university and Canada-wide gallery exchanges.

(Volute is available for \$7.50 at Coles, Concordia and McGill bookstores, Danger! and Paragraphe.

"Those students who came out enjoyed themselves. Some things we could have done better, some were beyond our control, there is a lot we can learn and pass on for next year." When asked about the impact Orientation would have on the budget of the Student Union this year, she replied "A lot of time and effort was spent finding sponsors for all of our events, and the money we've raised will help keep our costs low."

But without question, Saturday night rocked at the Hive. The video dance party attracted well over three hundred students and kept the dance floor packed right up until closing.

Giles stated that now that Orientation is over, she is looking forward to the regular school year, and "normal" work at the Student Union. "If there's such a thing as normal work around here. She

added, "and getting some sleep and hitting some classes!"

## Thank You

Over the course of the week, dozens of students from all faculties gave their time, energy and sometimes cars to help the weeks celebrations take form. After putting in long hours, missing their classes, neglecting their diets and sleeping patterns, many of the volunteers would show up again at eight the next morning. Special thanks go to: Both Nathalies, both Sharons, the one and only Josée, Issam, Eric, Ziad, Roy, Kevin, Annick, Kristine, Sophie, Olaf, Lana, Dana, the women of D-Phi-E, the CSSP and the countless hordes we've forgotten.

- James, Marika & Sophia



# Vice President Administration

"The Vice President (Administration) will assist the President in all duties of the Office, chiefly in each of the following three areas:

## Office Management

- purchasing
- staff
- space planning and renovations

## Groups

- chief liaison
- registration of groups
- development of policies
- distribution of resources
- Student Life
- chair student caucus on CCSL
- joint efforts with VP (Services) regarding long outstanding student services"

... taken from the Vice Presidential Portfolio guidelines for application, 1994-1995.

The above are just some of the major headings within this portfolio. Practically speaking, the office should ensure that this means :

- the reception desks will open on time and the staff will help you no matter how ridiculous your question is, or how many times they have heard the same question that day.
- if you are student with a lot of extra time and want to get together with your fellow students in a more structured way than over coffee, you'll get help starting a group.
- if you are fed up with the escalators, had it with the clocks never showing the right time, sick for the third time this week on Marriott food, or given up your apartment to afford text books ... these are causes that will be taken to the Concordia Council on Student Life (CCSL).

Less obvious (and a real perk for the VP 'Admin') is tying up the loose ends created in last year's constitutional referendum and implementing a real and lasting infrastructure for the Student Union, one that will withstand even the most inept or corrupt government. Also falling plunk into this portfolio is hunting down some real space for the Student Union.

All of this cannot be done by one person, nor should it be, because all the secrets of success will be lost when the VP's term of office is up. To ensure a life span of more than a year for the momentum that is created, there are positions for students on the Administration Commission. We are looking for six students to join the Commission. Three students will be selected from the Council of Representatives. These elected councillors, will ensure that the Commission's direction is on target with the general mandate issued in last year's election. These three people will be complemented by three more students selected-at-large. These students-at-large help to broaden the number of people actively involved in student government. The Commission should guarantee that there will be some continuity in the next year.

There are also countless committees which the University strikes to keep their bureaucratic machine rolling. Students are usually given a seat on these committees. To be cynical, we are there because they want to keep

us quiet while they bury us in paper work. Optimistically, while there we can ensure that policies and decision are made in such a way as to give students an advantage. Currently students are needed for the Tuition Refund Committee, the committee to select students to sit on the hearing panels for Code of Conduct non-academic cases and of course students for CCSL, (Concordia Council on Student Life).

The main challenges this year can be divided into four categories. First, to overhaul the office operations so that the Student Union runs like a well oiled machine on a clockwork schedule that students can rely on. Second, to assist the VP (Services) to, finally, put in place two computer labs, one at each campus. Third, to tackle some of the real and very practical stuff at the Concordia Council on Student Life like: the Hall Building escalators; the cost of chocolate bars in vending machines; the cost of textbooks and the profit the book store scrapes off our backs; the number of jobs available to

students on campus, (not just in the Student Union but all over campus); the lack of a shuttle bus shelter at Loyola; the quality of Marriott food and their monopoly with PepsiCo; a 24 hour study area; and the list could go on forever. Finally, our groups, not to mention the Student Union, need more space. There are big projects on the horizon to make this possible on both campuses. This year the Office of the VP (Administration), will lay the groundwork so that within a few years, students will have their own SUB (Student Union Building) or SUB(s), with one at each campus. With a real SUB all the groups and student services and businesses would be under one roof. In the meantime, the groups' day-to-day needs will not be forgotten. After a few years of not publishing, this year a detailed User's Manual is available to each group. The Manual will help executives get through the year. There will also be monthly meetings for groups to network and pool resources.

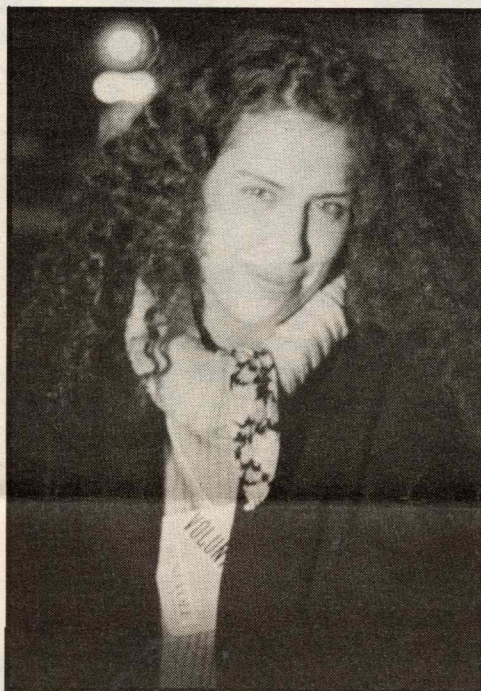
Any student who wants to be more involved may contact the VP (Administration) at 848-7474. If you don't have time to give to a committee or the Commission, but are fed up with climbing the escalators to the 7th floor of the Hall Building, call the Rector's Office at 848-4848, or for indigestion from Marri-rot caf food call the Vice Rector (Services) at 848-4867.

In absolute solidarity with all students trapped in this Canadian make-work project called Concordia the door to the VP (Administration)'s office is always open.

## Feedback needed:

What do you think about these issues?

- the Model United nations group seeking independence from the Political Science Students' Association
- folding the Anti Apartheid group
- merging CFLI and CRSG
- any student, regardless of their faculty of study, eligible to join an academic group



**Lana Grimes (pictured above) is an Independent student enrolled in political science courses. She was born in Ontario, and raised in New Brunswick. Lana's door is always open for students to drop by.**

# Ink

Volume 1, Issue 2  
September 15, 1994

The Concordia Student Union  
*Ink* is published every second  
Thursday by the Concordia  
Student Union Inc.

This publication is overseen by  
an Editorial Panel working in  
conjunction with the Council of  
Representatives and the Execu-  
tive of the Student Union.

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## Opinion

# The PQ and you

by Olaf de Winter

As you all know by now, the Parti Québécois won last Monday's provincial election and will form a majority government in the National Assembly for what will probably be five years of talk about sovereignty; one or two referenda; and maybe even a replay of the mass **exodus** of 1976 and 1979. What we will not see in the next five years is separation. Although the PQ won a majority in the National Assembly, this does not mean that most of Quebecers support independence. In fact, the PQ's 77-seat majority — compared to the opposition Liberals' 47 seats — is misleading because only 44.7% of the population voted PQ while 44.3% (a difference of 0.4%) voted Liberal. Meanwhile, the Action Démocratique, led by Concordia grad Mario Dumont, won a single seat with 6.5% of the popular vote — which, in some people's minds, adds up to 51.2% support for sovereignty. Clearly, the electorate of this province sent a very strong message to Mr. Parizeau and the rest of the merry men of independence: that the Canadian choice is still favoured by most Quebecers.

What this means to students is that the important issues facing this province will not be foremost on the agenda. Bills on education, however pejorative they are to the quality of education, will pass into law without much debate or **authentic** opposition. Allophone and Anglophone students will have to be aware of laws passed that affect their right to choose the language of their education. The PQ has promised to review the CEGEP system and has hinted that some — particularly immigrant — students, will no longer have the option of going to English CEGEPs. Although this does not affect Concordia students directly, we must **assume** our responsibility towards society to promote not only freedom of expression, but freedom of choice in education, and eventually in our children's education.

On another level, what this means to Concordia and, on a larger scale, to the Anglophone community of Quebec, is that once again we have to go on the offensive to safeguard our existing rights, and maintain a close scrutiny on the government. To do so, we must fulfill our mandate as a university: to be a critical member of the society we live in.



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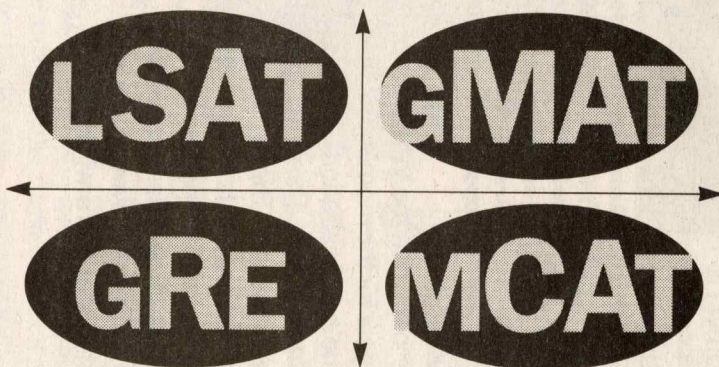
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Correction: Please note that in Lana Grimes' article last issue, the description of Dr. Charles Bertrand, the Interim Rector, was inaccurate. Dr. Bertrand is in fact an American born historian who speaks three languages (French, English, and Italian). We regret any inconveniences this may have caused Dr. Bertrand.